

Going to Work Series

# Keeping a Job – Meeting the Public

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There are some important skills to use when working with others, such as being tactful and sincere. How you treat others at work will help determine the overall work atmosphere and the likelihood of customers wanting to come back. Using good manners on the job says to others, “I am a concerned worker.” Greeting people, exchanging information, clarifying a message, avoiding gossip and giving sincere feedback are good communication skills all workers need to practice.

## Greeting and Addressing People

In most jobs there will be some type of person-to-person contact, either with customers or with other employees. The overall atmosphere will depend on how you approach people. Some service jobs, such as those found in restaurants, department stores and hospitals, have a certain phrase they want employees to use when addressing customers or patients. Here are some examples of these phrases.

*“Hello, may I help you?”*

*“Good evening. Welcome to Burger Hut. May I take your order?”*

*“Good morning, Mr. Smith. How are you?”*

While on the job, good communication with your co-workers is important. This interaction usually sets the overall tone of the work area for the day. Employees who have friendly, but not intimate, work relationships enjoy their work, and other workers want them on their

team. Here is an example of a conversation between employees.

Paul sees his friend Sam before work.

**Paul:** “Morning, Sam. How are you doing?”

**Sam:** “Pretty good. And you?”

**Paul:** “Not bad. How’s the work going?”

**Sam:** “Good.”

**Paul:** “See you at lunch.”

**Sam:** “Okay. See you later.”

Notice that they greeted each other with simple phrases. They did not talk too long. They knew there was work to be done but wanted to speak or acknowledge the other person’s presence.

Knowing the right way to address people with proper titles is also important. Some people may be offended if you address them incorrectly. Here are some examples of the right ways to use titles when addressing people.

Mr. ----- men (any marital status)  
Ms. ----- women (any marital status)  
Mrs. ----- married women only  
Miss ----- single women only

Most of these expressions begin with a general greeting followed by a more specific question. Remember, too, that Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Miss are only used with last names (family names).

For example, Roger McDaniel would be Mr. McDaniel **not** Mr. Roger, and Ann Berg would be Mrs. Berg, **not** Miss Ann.

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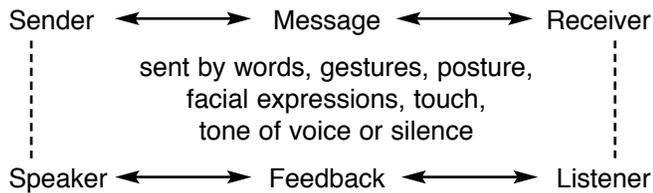
## Communication Skills

When people communicate, they share feelings, ideas, facts, attitudes and beliefs.

Good communication at work is important because it enables us to achieve success in many ways. For example, good communication can be used in these ways.

- To test our thoughts
- To reduce tension
- To resolve conflicts
- To solve problems
- To help us gain understanding

Below is a visual picture of the communication process.



Studies have shown that 70 percent of communication is non-verbal. Here are some examples of non-verbal communication:

- A frown
- Raised eyebrow
- Trembling chin
- A smile
- Shrug of the shoulders
- A patting foot
- Sweaty hands

Listening, understanding and asking questions are the basis of good communication skills. They provide a worker the chance to give feedback and clarify the information being given.

Here are some useful ways to ask for help when you don't understand.

- "Please repeat those last three numbers."
- "I'm sorry. I don't understand what you're saying. Could you explain that again?"
- "Mr. Jones, will you explain how to use this new piece of equipment?"

- "Mrs. Jackson, did you want me to clean Room 313-319 today or tomorrow?"
- "Ms. Johnson, what color did you say you wanted your hair colored, medium or dark blonde?"

In most cases, asking for help will prevent problems and misunderstandings. Sometimes people ask questions just to make sure the person wanted a certain product or service. It is common for waiters at a restaurant to repeat their customer's order or for a hospital aide to check her list of room numbers for special diets.

Good listening involves concentrating on what is being said. It is helpful to keep your thoughts on the conversation and avoid distractions. When responding to your speaker's comments, you are giving feedback on the statements made by the speaker. Your feedback should be directed at the statements the speaker has made, not the speaker. Assumptions should be avoided. Ask if you are unsure.

You can be successful by working hard at your job and by being respectful to your co-workers and customers. Having good communication skills yourself will enable you to make the business or place of employment a more successful one, too. If a group of workers have a close relationship, they contribute to the company's success and enjoy going to work every day.

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